

ASTHMA ASSESSMENT and MANAGEMENT KEY ELEMENTS PROVIDER REFERENCE POCKET CARD

DoD/VA Key Elements of the Asthma Clinical Practice Guideline:

Initial Diagnosis

- ▶ Consider asthma in the differential diagnosis of any patient who presents with persistent respiratory problems
- ▶ Use spirometry to help make the diagnosis for children over 6 years-old
- ▶ Use trials of asthma medication to determine response to asthma therapy as an aid to diagnosis

Follow-up Visits/Long Term Asthma Management

- ▶ Classify asthma severity
 - Use NHLBI standards (mild intermittent: mild, moderate, and severe persistent)
 - Use objective measures of airways obstruction (peak flow, spirometry) to determine asthma severity
 - Use patient report of symptoms to help classify asthma severity
- ▶ Treat patient based on asthma severity classification
 - Provide/adjust quick reliever and long-term controller medications to attain optimal control of the patient's asthma
 - Long term controller medications are needed for mild persistent, moderate persistent and severe persistent asthma
- ▶ Educate patients concerning their asthma
 - Educate patients about the role of reliever and controller medications over

Follow-up Visits ▶ Educate patients concerning their asthma (continued)

- Educate appropriate patients on how to self-monitor their asthma with a peak flow meter
- Educate patients on signs/symptoms of worsening asthma
- Educate patients on when and how to contact their primary care manager (PCM)
- Provide a written action plan
- ▶ Preventive maintenance/trigger avoidance
 - Assess triggers and institute environmental controls when indicated
 - Vaccinate against influenza
 - Provide smoking cessation information when appropriate
- ▶ Provide follow-up on regular basis and ensure that the patient has a PCM

Emergency Management of Asthma Exacerbations:

- ▶ use objective measures to assess airways obstruction/exacerbation severity
- ▶ Pulse oximetry
- ▶ Peak flow or FEV₁
- ▶ Treat promptly with corticosteroids and short acting, inhaled beta₂-agonists
- ▶ Assess response to therapy using objective measures as well as clinical exam
- ▶ Discharge patient with appropriate education, written instructions, and follow-up

Telephone Triage:

- ▶ Assess the severity of the asthma exacerbation
- ▶ Patients with severe exacerbations should NOT be managed at home
- ▶ Review the patient's action plan and set up appropriate follow-up



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